

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, palm up, holding a small dragonfly. The dragonfly has a blue body and transparent wings with orange and black markings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. The image is used as a background for the text.

Design from a creative brief

Designer and client must
work toward the
same goal. Here's
how to do that.



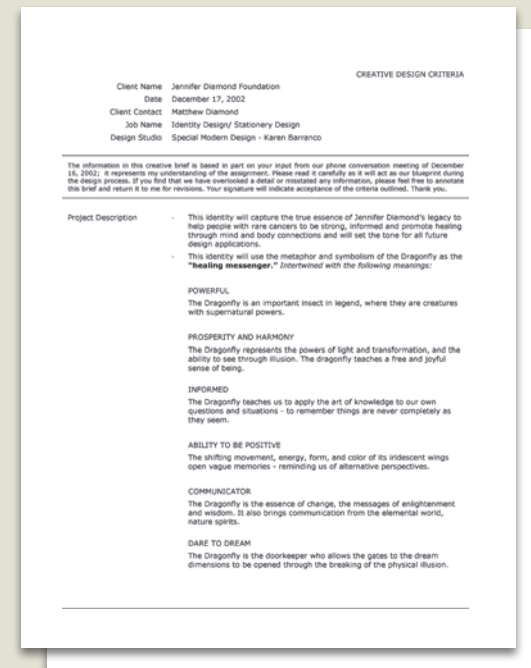
Design from a creative brief

To know if you've reached a design goal, you must first know what the goal is. Here's where to start answering that.



When 30-year-old Jennifer Diamond quietly passed away of appendiceal carcinoma, a rare form of cancer, on July 23, 2002, she left behind family, friends and a gentle legacy of gracefulness and love. And she left her father Harvey with a mission—"to share the knowledge gained from this experience with others." So was born the Jennifer Diamond Foundation, which would be "dedicated to helping people win the fight against all forms of cancer."

Soon after, designer Karen Barranco was retained to give Jennifer's foundation a public image. The beautiful logo she made is a textbook lesson in how to design for a client—and work to a shared, creative vision. The process begins not on a computer but face to face with the client, for as long as it takes, listening, building rapport, understanding—and *sharing*—the mission. Here's how she did it:



Write it down The creative brief is the blueprint for the project. It is a collaboration of designer and client. It includes a project overview, goals, messages, audience description, budget, schedule, and so on. The act of writing all this down means that everyone has talked through and agreed on what the design is to embody.



Listen

When you meet your client, your most important tools are your ears. Hear *who they are* and *what they're saying*. As you proceed together, talk about the goals for the design. (Which is different from what the design should *look* like.) Develop the creative brief. Keep it short. Use clear headlines and bulleted lists.

Project description

The project description is a brief summary of what we're doing and why. Because dragonflies had symbolic meaning to Jennifer and her family, the decision was made at the outset that a dragonfly would be central to the image, so it was included here.

Meanings

What is the symbolism of the dragonfly? Don't assume you know. Listen to your client. Participate; fill in the gaps with research, but check your results with the client. Think in metaphors, which helps you avoid becoming too literal. Avoid clichés.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This identity will capture the true essence of Jennifer Diamond's legacy to help people with rare cancers to be strong, informed and promote healing through mind and body connections and will set the tone for all future design applications. This identity will use the metaphor and symbolism of the Dragonfly as the "healing messenger," intertwined with the following meanings:

Powerful

The Dragonfly is an important insect in legend, where they are creatures with supernatural powers.

Prosperity and Harmony

The Dragonfly represents the powers of light and transformation, and the ability to see through illusion. The dragonfly teaches a free and joyful sense of being.

Informed

The Dragonfly teaches us to apply the art of knowledge to our own questions and situations—to remember things are never completely as they seem.

Ability to be Positive

The shifting movement, energy, form, and color of its iridescent wings open vague memories, reminding us of alternative perspectives.

Communicator

The Dragonfly is the essence of change, the messages of enlightenment and wisdom. It also brings communication from the elemental world, nature spirits.

Dare to Dream

The Dragonfly is the doorkeeper who allows the gates to the dream dimensions to be opened through the breaking of the physical illusion.



Audience

An image that has meaning to one group may be meaningless to another. Understand who the audience is. Let your client guide you. *Don't assume you know the audience or what it is like.* Keep in mind that the first audience is the client himself and his employees and volunteers. They must enjoy their logo and be proud of it and what it represents. Seriously.

Messages

A logo is a signature, not a marketing program. It does not need to "tell the whole story." Nevertheless, it has a story to tell. The logo may picture the product or service. It may be only the name. But it will always convey an intangible—perhaps a vision or attitude or feeling. In this, it is similar to clothing; a red suit says something different from jeans. Write down everything you imagine. This is the artistic step. *We must say visually what words alone cannot.*

Approaches

This step is more mechanical than artistic. Write down what can and can't be done. This helps you and the client approach the conceptual stage with better clarity and focus.

AUDIENCE

- Organization to Individual – non profit
- Core Target: Individuals and family members with rare cancers
- Secondary Target: Medical Community
- Tertiary Target: private and business sectors potential donors

GOALS/PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Position as a premium non-profit organization operating in a niche market.
- Attract interest and respect.

MESSAGES

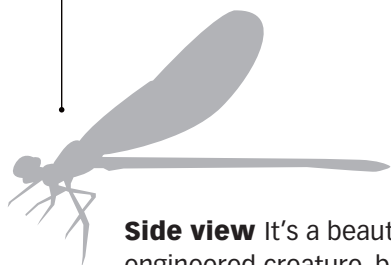
- Convey confidence, trusted guidance, credibility, professionalism
- Project growth, stability and trust
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- Conservative, reliable, tasteful, elegant, subtle
- Understated simplicity, Clean and simple with minimal "lines"
- Feminine, soft and warm without being too "girly"
- Welcoming and approachable
- Sophisticated, not too rich, though. Embossing may be too "extravagant" for non profit; we can discuss.

APPROACHES

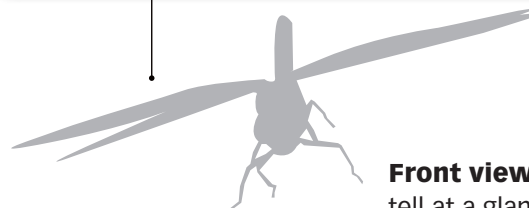
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- Typographical solution with the integration of a symbol/mark
- Explore using the dragonfly as a symbol
- Up to three colors, open to more?
- Must be used in color and b/w

Get to work

A dragonfly will be central to the logo. A dragonfly in real life is beautiful but complex, and the logo needs to be simple. One way to achieve simplicity is to use a silhouette. A silhouette must have just the right pose . . .



Side view It's a beautifully engineered creature, but sticky little insect legs say *bug*, not warmth, femininity or welcome.



Front view What is this? It's hard to tell at a glance, and you probably don't want it crawling on you.

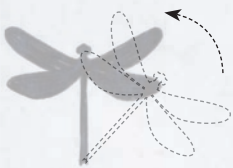


Top view This is the strong view. Simple, symmetrical, graceful. No legs, no body parts, all attention is on those wings.



Get artistic

The logo must convey many intangible qualities. Fill in the silhouette, then begin working out lines and shapes; each small variation will “say” something different.



Rotate Upright orientation is natural to our eye, because it's the most like us. In this position, the dragonfly appears balanced, motionless, stable, “standing” like an object to be admired, almost as if we're viewing a statue.

Angled edges Flattening the curves yields somewhat crystalline shapes. The idea is interesting, but here it appears heavy and masculine, which we don't want.

Abstract Sharp points and flat head look too much like a nail or a plant. The tapered body, however, shows potential; it lightens the weight of the silhouette, a feminine quality.

Push

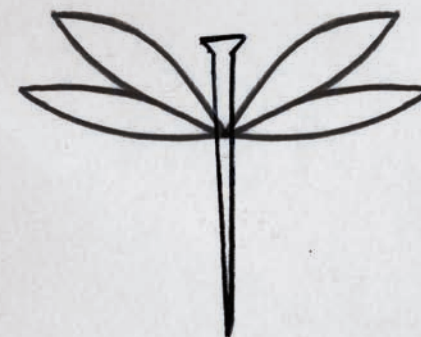
Because lighter is better, push that direction. Lighten it more by outlining the silhouette. Listen to what the lines are saying. As you work, pay attention to small improvements.



Continuous line Single line makes a fluid image, sweeping and graceful, like a spinning ballerina. This image is light but fairly abstract—we're losing the sense of a dragonfly—but its attributes are desirable.



Continuous line, simplified The complex, single line is replaced with a simplified line, which often yields better results but here does not. Yet while the single wings look nothing like a dragonfly, they do suggest an angel.



Abstract, outlined Pointed wings take the angel idea further. Four wings say dragonfly, but the image has now morphed into a symbol and is no longer an insect. The lines can also be seen as single wings in motion. The taper has returned.

Expand

Two lines and a circle are a breakthrough. The image not only has dragonfly symbolism but acquires that of an angelic figure, too, clearly feminine.



Flat head The wings are sleek and pretty, but the blunt “head” still looks like a nail. Although unfinished, key at this point is that the design has developed a clear direction.



Arms added Two curves become arms that are open in gentle welcome . . .



. . . and a circle becomes a head. The body is widened into a tapered diamond—which, of course, has its own symbolism—and the image has become beautiful. This sketch was shown to the client, who loved everything except one detail . . .



Converging lines are deleted because they reminded Harvey of the tubes that were attached to Jennifer at the hospital.

Render

Refine on the computer. A single line weight lends strength and posture and ties the two chief images—Jennifer and dragonfly—together.



Position of arms Open arms welcome; clasped “hands” portray care, watchfulness.

Floating like an angel Tapered base conveys weightlessness.

The finished symbol is a beautiful blend of images, simple, engaging, timeless, powerful. It connects on many levels—inviting, caring, confident, dignified, angelic and so on.

Type

Mighty Trajan, first inscribed in stone on Emperor Trajan's column in Rome, has the dignity and stability that befits a premium cancer foundation.



Main typeface It's seen a lot of use in recent years, but Trajan is timeless—strong, permanent, a direct connection to the ancient past. Its default letterspacing is like the engraved column, above. It can be looser but should not be tighter than this.



THE
JENNIFER
DIAMOND
←----- F O U N D A T I O N -----→

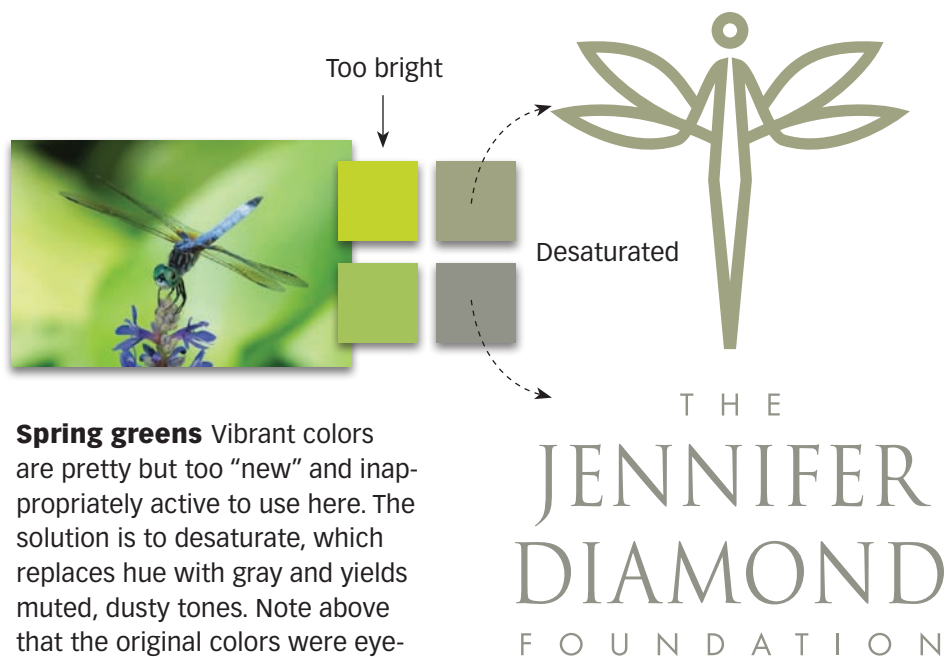
The stable center Centered type reinforces the symmetrical symbol. Centering is robust, stable, motionless, which strengthens the sense of permanence.

FOUN

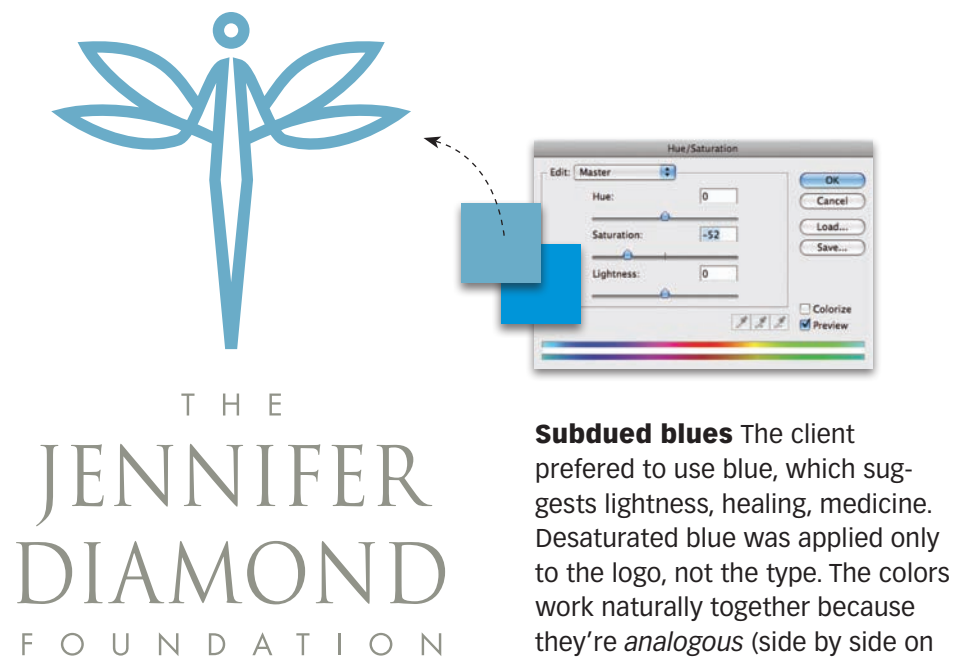
Secondary typeface The simple forms of modern classic Futura Book are crystal clear and nearly style-neutral. Because of this, Futura makes an excellent complement to Trajan and many other typefaces as well. Note its panoramic letterspacing (left).

Color

A colorful dragonfly suggests bright, spring hues, but they would be too active. Muting the colors conveys softness, professionalism, trust.



Spring greens Vibrant colors are pretty but too "new" and inappropriately active to use here. The solution is to desaturate, which replaces hue with gray and yields muted, dusty tones. Note above that the original colors were eye-droppered from the image.



Subdued blues The client preferred to use blue, which suggests lightness, healing, medicine. Desaturated blue was applied only to the logo, not the type. The colors work naturally together because they're *analogous* (side by side on the color wheel) and mainly gray.

Our report card

As we have seen, the creative brief gives everyone goals to work toward. And now that we're done, it provides the measure by which to judge the outcome. Keep in mind that many goals—"professional," for example—are subjective, and that *the client gets a vote*.

Does the logo meet the goals? From the creative brief . . .

- Captures the "true essence of Jennifer Diamond's legacy to help people with rare cancers be strong, informed and promote healing . . ."
- Attractive to "individuals and family members with rare cancers, plus the medical community and donors"
- **Dragonfly** This central feature is clearly visible in the outcome.
- Conveys "confidence, credibility, professionalism"



T H E
JENNIFER
DIAMOND
F O U N D A T I O N

- The image is that of a "premium non-profit organization."
- It "attracts interest and respect."
- Conveys "stability, trust, credibility"
- Appears "timeless, not trendy"
- It's "conservative, reliable, tasteful, elegant, subtle."
- It's "feminine, soft and warm without being girly."
- It's "welcoming and approachable."

Letterhead, envelope and business card are designed as a package; note the logo and type are the same size on all three pieces.



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Harvey Diamond

Vice President
Matthew Diamond

Secretary
Rachel Farley

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David Jackel

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Harvey Diamond, Chair
Matthew Diamond
Rachel Farley
Marshall Gelfand



1880 Century Park East
16th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067

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www.jenniferdiamondfoundation.org

Letterhead

Light colors and small, light type convey a sense of peacefulness and dignity. Top logo and bottom address are far apart, but centered alignment keeps them connected. Key personnel are on the far left; wide line spacing sustains the airiness.



Harvey Diamond
President

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Los Angeles, CA 90067

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fax 805 379 2913

harvey@jenniferdiamondfoundation.org
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Business card

Vertical format heightens the sense of a floating angel. Aligned-left copy repeats that on the envelope and letterhead.

Envelope White logo on the printed flap is an impressive touch that draws full attention to the message it wordlessly conveys. Manufacturing the full-bleed flap requires that the envelope be printed flat, then assembled.

Article resources

Special thanks to the ever-impressive Karen Barranco for allowing us to morph her beautiful work into a design lesson. Developing an image of this caliber is neither as easy, nor as linear, as a condensed, 1–2–3 article makes it appear and often involves nail biting and sleepless nights. And, of course, a true brand is about much more than a logo. Nevertheless, the principles shown here are correct and in good order and have a lot to teach us.

About Karen we can say this—that if we were in need of a designer, she would be on our short list of people to phone. See more of her work—and read about her process—on her Web site, www.specialmoderndesign.com.

Visit the Jennifer Diamond Cancer Foundation at www.jenniferdiamondfoundation.org.

Typefaces

- 1 [Adobe Garamond Italic](#)
- 2 [Frutiger Roman](#)
- 3 [Futura Book](#)
- 4 [Trajan Pro](#)

Images

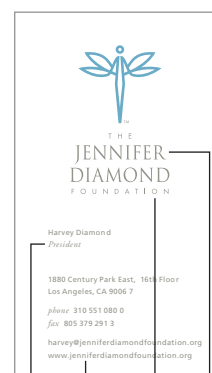
Images: iStockphoto

- 5 [\(6980328\)](#)
- 6 [\(7339555\)](#)

Colors

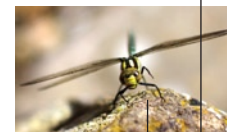
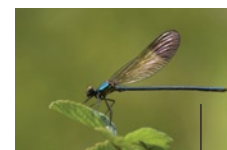
7 PMS 550

8 PMS 7539



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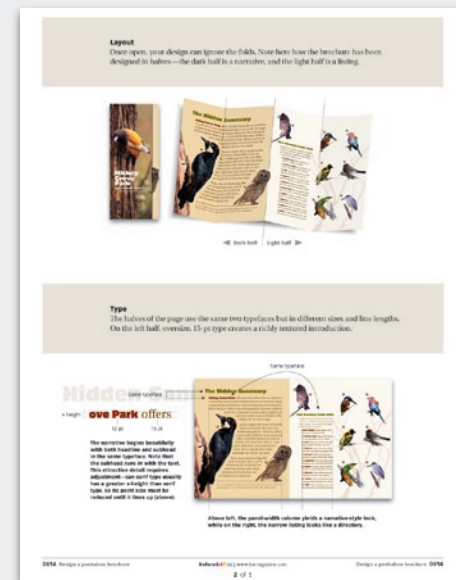


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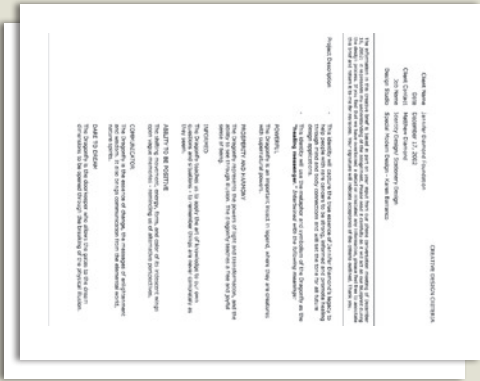
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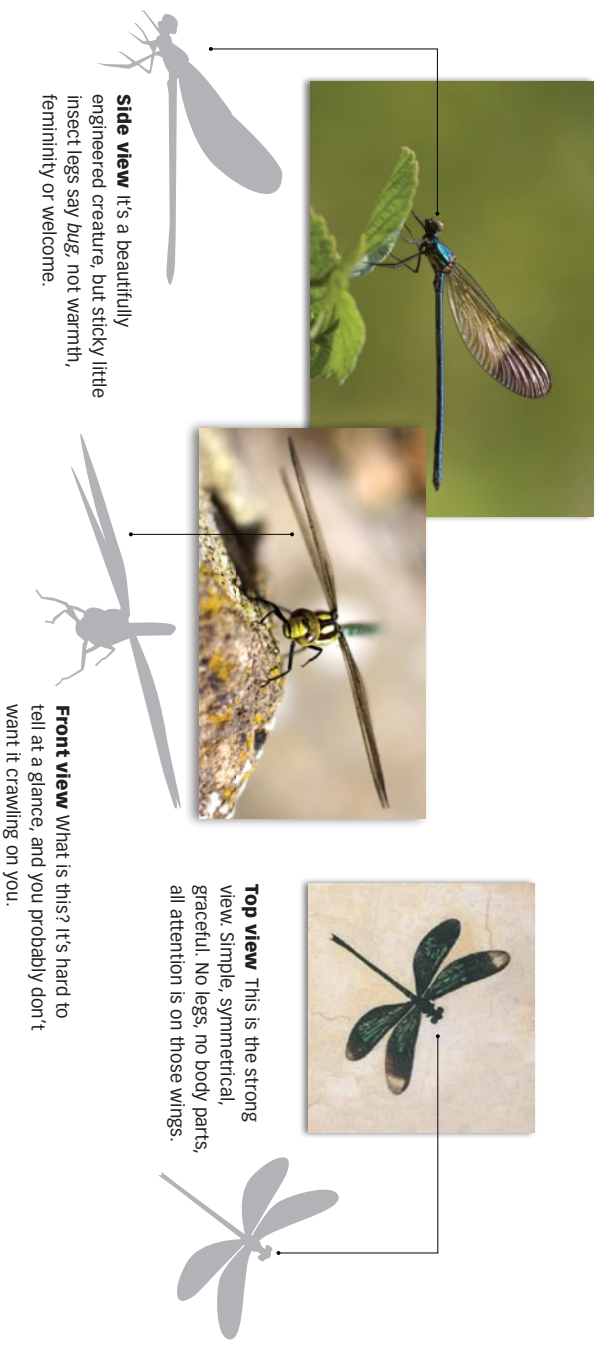
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A dragonfly will be central to the logo. A dragonfly in real life is beautiful but complex, and the logo needs to be simple. One way to achieve simplicity is to use a silhouette. A silhouette must have just the right pose...



Side view It's a beautifully engineered creature, but sticky little insect legs say *bug*, not warmth, femininity or welcome.

Front view What is this? It's hard to tell at a glance, and you probably don't want it crawling on you.

Top view This is the strong view. Simple, symmetrical, graceful. No legs, no body parts, all attention is on those wings.



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Angled edges Flattening the curves yields somewhat crystalline shapes. The idea is interesting, but here it appears heavy and masculine, which we don't want.

Abstract Sharp points and flat head look too much like a nail or a plant. The tapered body, however, shows potential; it lightens the weight of the silhouette, a feminine quality.

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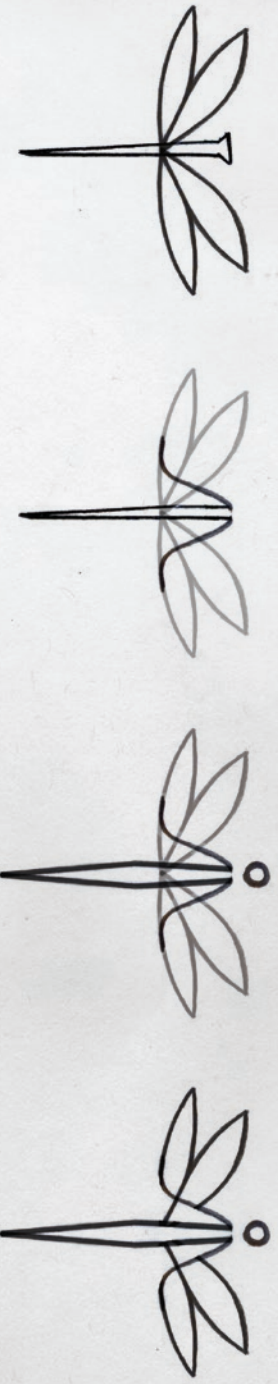
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Abstract, outlined Pointed wings take the angel idea further. Four wings say dragonfly but the image has now morphed into a symbol and is no longer an insect. The lines can also be seen as single wings in motion. The taper has returned.

Expand

Two lines and a circle are a breakthrough. The image not only has dragonfly symbolism but acquires that of an angelic figure, too, clearly feminine.



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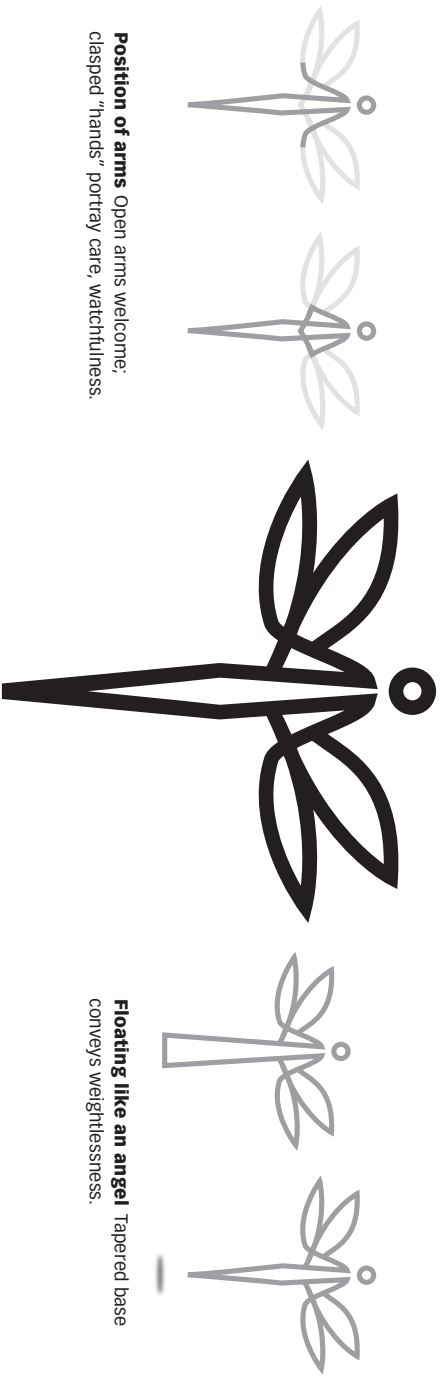
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Render

Refine on the computer. A single line weight lends strength and posture and ties the two chief images—Jennifer and dragonfly—together.



Position of arms Open arms welcome; clasped “hands” portray care, watchfulness.

The finished symbol is a beautiful blend of images, simple, engaging, timeless, powerful. It connects on many levels—inviting, caring, confident, dignified, angelic and so on.

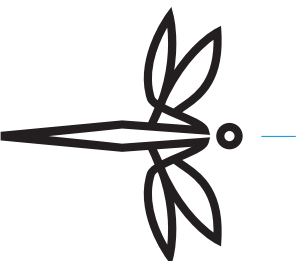
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Color

A colorful dragonfly suggests bright, spring hues, but they would be too active. Muting the colors conveys softness, professionalism, trust.



Our report card

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- Attractive to “individuals and family members with rare cancers, plus the medical community and donors”
- **Dragonfly** This central feature is clearly visible in the outcome.
- Conveys “confidence, credibility, professionalism”



THE
JENNIFER
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FOUNDATION

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Letterhead, envelope and business card are designed as a package; note the logo and type are the same size on all three pieces.

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www.jenniferdiamondfoundation.org



1886 Century Park East
18th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067



Letterhead

Light colors and small, light type convey a sense of peacefulness and dignity. Top logo and bottom address are far apart, but centered alignment keeps them connected. Key personnel are on the far left, wide line spacing sustains the airiness.



1886 Century Park East, 18th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90067
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Business card

Vertical format heightens the sense of a floating angel. Aligned-left copy repeats that on the envelope and letterhead.

Article resources

Special thanks to the ever-impressive Karen Barranco for allowing us to morph her beautiful work into a design lesson. Developing an image of this caliber is neither as easy, nor as linear, as a condensed, 1–2–3 article makes it appear and often involves nail biting and sleepless nights. And, of course, a true brand is about much more than a logo. Nevertheless, the principles shown here are correct and in good order and have a lot to teach us.

About Karen we can say this—that if we were in need of a designer, she would be on our short list of people to phone. See more of her work—and read about her process—on her Web site, www.specialmoderndesign.com.

Visit the Jennifer Diamond Cancer Foundation at www.jenniferdiamondfoundation.org.

Typefaces

- 1 [Adobe Garamond Italic](#)
- 2 [Futuraiger Roman](#)
- 3 [Futura Book](#)
- 4 [Trajan Pro](#)

Images

Images: iStockphoto

- 5 [\(6980328\)](#)
- 6 [\(7339555\)](#)



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